

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1042

By Pitts

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Michael T. Harris on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize, particularly on the occasion of their retirement, those outstanding school administrators who have devoted their careers to providing the highest quality education for Tennessee's students; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding individual is Michael T. Harris, who will soon begin a much-deserved retirement from the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System, for which he has admirably served as Director of Schools since August of 2006; and

WHEREAS, a professional educator for more than thirty-six years, Mr. Harris has served with distinction in the school districts of Bartow County, Georgia; Williamson County, Tennessee; Sioux Center, Iowa; and Guilford County, North Carolina, prior to his current illustrious tenure as the Director of Schools; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure in Clarksville-Montgomery, he focused on, directed, or acted as a proponent for unique and positive opportunities for students, including: the Middle College at Austin Peay State University; the STEM Academy at Kenwood High School; a motivational program for Advanced Placement students; the reconstitution of Norman Smith Elementary; an ACT preparatory course for all high school students; Science, Technology, Engineering and Math integration systemwide; and the 100% Graduation is Clarksville's Business initiative; and

WHEREAS, he has worked assiduously to motivate Clarksville-Montgomery County's students to reach their full potential and has also put a strong focus on identifying, hiring, and retaining quality educators; he held the district to its high expectations of rigor and relevance in the classroom; and

WHEREAS, his dedicated efforts have produced impressive results; during his tenure the school district's graduation rate has improved from 76% to 93.5% and the dropout rate has been reduced by 73% in three years; and

WHEREAS, over his six-year tenure in Clarksville-Montgomery County, he witnessed the opening of five new schools, including Barkers Mill Elementary, West Creek Elementary, Rossvie Elementary, West Creek High, Carmel Elementary, and the early phases of Pisgah Elementary. He also oversaw the renovation of Montgomery Central High School and the initiation of the renovation of Northwest High School; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harris committed to the revitalization of the Clarksville-Montgomery County Education Foundation by placing a priority on expanding community involvement and support for the schools. During his leadership, the Education Foundation fostered unprecedented community volunteerism and fundraising efforts to help support district goals; and

WHEREAS, initiated by Mr. Harris, the CMCSS Leadership system has been successful in educating the Foundation Board members to more fully appreciate the school system and all it does for students and the community, yet another example of his insights into those things that help set this school system apart from most in Tennessee and also continue to place it in a position for success long after he is gone; and

WHEREAS, under his directorship, the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System received exceptionally high marks from the internationally premier public schools accrediting agency, AdvancEd. In its exit report, AdvancEd's team leader told CMCSS that its performance and report results were in the top two percent of districts across the world; and

WHEREAS, while Tennessee's public schools have undergone unprecedented change during his six years at Clarksville-Montgomery County, Mr. Harris has been a vocal advocate for public schools and their students by weighing in on public and legislative policies and proposed laws; and

WHEREAS, believing deeply in his mission of educating, empowering, and encouraging all students to achieve their maximum potential, Mr. Harris has guided the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System with tremendous acumen and alacrity and leaves the school system in excellent shape for the future; and

WHEREAS, Representative Joe Pitts stated that, "Mike Harris has distinguished himself as the consummate public educator. His concern for students and his laser like focus on improving the school district will continue to pay dividends for years to come. We are grateful for his dedication and pursuit of education excellence and wish him and his family the best for the future."; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Michael T. Harris has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his students, parents, teachers, and school board alike; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to Michael T. Harris our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement, applaud his dedication to the students of Tennessee, and wish him much happiness and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.